

Love, Life and Business in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY—The most interesting travels today are upon our own continent. About \$500,000 Americans now spend something like \$100,000,000 every year in going to Europe. They spend it for sight, they go abroad to find strange customs and queer costumes, but return saying that such things have all passed away and that the people of Europe and the United States are much the same. The only part of Holland which has the old-fashioned cap, the wooden shoe and the voluminous trousers, apparently cut out with a circular saw, is to be found on the island of Marken, and the other islands along the North coast. You can see as interesting Germans in Milwaukee or St. Louis as you can in old Deutschland, and there are quite as many Irish faces in Boston as in Dublin or Cork. Even Egypt is overrun with American tourists, and there are parts of Cairo which are not much different from parts of New York.

In the Guatemala Market.
On the other hand, take this city of Guatemala. It abounds in strange sights. The houses are all low and old-fashioned; they are painted bright colors and they show like dolls' houses under the sun. Comparatively few of the people are dressed as we are. The men from the country have their own costumes and the Indian tribes which constitute three-fourths of the population have each a dress of their own.

Come with me to the market. It lies just below the wide plaza where the gayly uniformed band plays every night. It is within a stone's throw of the cathedral whose architecture is as interesting as any in Spain, and the market house itself consists of acres of low buildings surrounding a court, the scenes of which remind you of the bazaars of far-away India. The whole covers four or five acres. There is a great wall of stores around the outside, and the court is roofed over to cover the booth shops and stores of the bazaar. The market is divided up into sections, and everything under the sun is sold in it. There are booths full of native shawls, silk underclothes of every description. There are sections devoted to the selling of meats, some to the selling of iron and others to woodenware, basket work and to hats, hammocks and children's toys.

The streets outside the market are filled with Indians, who squat on the ground with their packs before them, and with the wares they have brought in from the country spread out upon mats. Here is a woman selling pottery of quaint make; there are others who have fancy baskets before her, and further on are Indians selling straw hats and sandals. Some of the hats are a foot and three feet in breadth, ending in a peak at the top.

A Look at the Peddlers.
There are peddlers everywhere, and such peddlers! Here comes one smoking a cigar. She is an Indian woman with big, liquid eyes, black hair and a face the color of copper. She is selling candies which seem to be painted. They are of all sorts of reds, yellows and billows green. The candy boxes are of bark, and she has some put up in strips of brightly colored paper. Next her is a peddler who is hawking iguanas. These are lizards which have heads like a turtle and tails like a snake. Some of them are as big as a cat, and those that this girl has are cooked or dried and ready to eat.

Here come two girls carrying baskets of eggs. The baskets are on their heads, for they move about through the crowd without danger. The girls are good looking. Their dress consists of a bright colored cloth about a yard wide, which is wrapped around the legs and the waist, showing only a slice of the calf. The shoulders and upper part of the body are enclosed in a waist with very full sleeves. This waist is beautifully embroidered and it often costs as much as the lace waists of our girls at home. These Indian girls have heads and combs about their necks. They are often bare footed, but not a few have over their heads Guatemala silk shawls of the brightest red, yellow or blue.

And then there are Indian men with packs on their backs and Indian women with babies in their arms. The market is as busy as a beehive on Saturday and the people have come in for many miles to buy and sell.

Guatemala Fruits.
To make our way through the crowd and stroll about in the court. There is no place that will give one a better idea of the richness of Guatemala. The fruits and vegetables are of every description. Here is a man selling aguacates, or alligator pears. You can buy one the size of a tin cup for 14 cents, and it will make the most delicious salad on earth. The same pear in New York, imported from Florida or Cuba, would cost 50 cents.

See that basket of tomatoes. They are as big around as base balls and they cost 2 cents apiece. Besides them are apples of a bright yellow color, the shape of Al-bemarle pippins, and next them some red ones that remind you of Rife's poem about the apples and the sun:
And the Winesaps blushed their reddest
When he spanked the Pippins ripe.

And then the pineapples. They are great baskets of them, ranging in size from that of two fists to a peck measure. I asked for the price and am told they bring from 2 to 5 cents apiece. There are also melons and papayas, whose flesh is as yellow as gold. The papaya grows on a tree, but it looks like a yellow muskmelon. It tastes much like the same, but it is so good for digestion that you can mix it with pork, mince pie or plum pudding and have no nightmare to follow.

Among the other fruits sold here is the mango-tree, which has a red skin and white flesh, and whose taste makes one think of ice cream. There are also oranges, bananas and lemons and other fruits strange to my eyes.

Sees the Rest of the Market.
But let us go into the meat market and look at the cook shops behind it. There is a half acre of meat peddlers. They are selling beef, pork and mutton cut up in long strips and hung on iron bars over their heads. The butchers are Indian women, bare-headed, red-faced and black-haired. Here is one bringing in a wash tub filled with pork cut in long strings. She hangs them over the rack above her counter like clothes on a line, and sells by the strip.

We go on to the cook shops. They cover half an acre. Each consists of an oven or stove built from the floor to the height of your waist, and so made that they form tables upon which, in pans filled with ashes, charcoal is burning. The pots, containing the meat, rest upon an iron framework over the coals, and each fire has its pot. Here is one in which fish is frying. Over three macaroni is steaming, and at my left fresh to-



Scene Outside the Market

matoes are cooking. There are great bowls of rice steaming away, and big iron jars of bean soup ready to serve. There are boiling eggs, there are frying plantains or bananas and further on making fritters of various kinds. The ordinary restaurant has a counter in front of it, and this serves also as a table. There is an Indian eating fried fish, and beside him a girl nibbling away at fried bananas, while farther on is a man shoveling in snails. The snails are sold by peddlers. There are great baskets of them with cabbage leaves at the sides, the latter being used to wrap up the snails. And then there are crabs upon strings, and fish no larger than white bait, which are sold by the pint.

How They Eat in Guatemala.
The fruits of this country are especially delicious and the vegetables are as good as can be raised anywhere under the sun. The only trouble is the cooking and serving. I am living at a hotel where the rate is \$40 or \$50 a day—I mean Guatemalan dollars—and I have dined at the other hotels and restaurants of the capital. Everything comes to the table in Spanish style. The meats are usually fried and the stews are so hot with peppers and chilis that they take the skin off the roof of your mouth.

The usual meals are desayuno on rising, almuerzo from 11 to 1 and dinner at about 8 o'clock in the evening. The desayuno, or first breakfast, consists only of coffee and bread, although at some of the hotels where foreigners stop you can have soft-boiled eggs or an omelet by paying extra. The coffee served is as black as ink, and it is made from an extract or essence formed by running cold water through the freshly ground powder. A bottle of this essence is placed on the table. You pour some into your cup, and the waiter fills it up with hot water, or with hot milk. A teaspoonful of essence will make a strong cup of coffee.

The almuerzo is the real breakfast. This is eaten by some at 11 or 12 o'clock and by others between 12 and 1. It is usually served table d'hôte and consists of a soup, some form of eggs, roast or fried meat with vegetables and a dessert. The dinner, which runs from 6 to 8 o'clock, is about the same, only the dishes are more in number and the dessert is more elaborate. Among the common dishes of every meal is a plate of boiled rice and one of black beans. As to sweets, the country has plenty of them and the fruits are unsurpassed.

Queer Domestic Arrangements.
Indeed, I find many queer things in Guatemala housekeeping. The cooking is all done with charcoal and the town is free from the smoke of soft coal. Most of the heat for warming comes from the sun and it is only in the houses of the rich or of foreigners that stoves or grates are to be found. There are no chimneys to speak of. The charcoal has little smoke and the fumes get out as they can. The ordinary broom of the country is a brush of round shape and the streets are swept with twigs tied to a stick.

As to the sleeping arrangements, the beds here are stuffed with cotton, and the most of them are exceedingly hard. The pillows are like so many stones, and the beds have few springs. In traveling in the interior one is lucky, if he gets more than a board and a blanket. I wish I could show you how the washing is done. My room at the hotel here is on the ground floor, looking out on a court. The room is much like a cave. It is a hole in the wall, lighted up by a window, which is very high up and by the door, which looks out on the court. It is in the court that all the washing is done. There is a concrete vat there filled with running water and about it the washwomen stand and kneel and pound the clothes, or slap them on the stones, so that there is a continual splashing from breakfast until dinner. The vat is five feet square and water in it is as cold as ice. The slapping breaks the buttons and frequently tears the clothing to pieces.

Kind of washing goes on throughout Central America. In Panama the most of the laundry work is done in the streams, the clothing being rubbed on the stones by half naked women. Here in Guatemala, and also in Costa Rica, there are some public laundries, consisting of concrete tubs fed by streams from the mountains.

I saw such a laundry in San Jose. It was a galvanized sheet covering half an acre. The floor of this was of brick and concrete, and in the center a concrete tub, so wide that you could drive a buggy through it and about 50 feet long, had been built. This tub or vat was higher than my shoulder and was filled with cold water. Outside the tub were steps built at intervals along the whole length on both sides, and upon these steps at least sixty women stood bending over and scouring their wash on the stones. Some were pounding a little with flat sticks, and others were lifting the pieces with a swing hewn in the air and slapping them down on the wall of the tub. Most of them were decrepit, and as their bare arms were raised high in the air and the linen came down with a noise like a pistol, it formed a curious scene.

I do not know where the ironing is done, but the clothes are dried on the grass or on bushes. My shirts are not starched, and the turnover collars instead of being folded are laid flat and

tied together, one on top of the other. They appear to have been ironed, but the fold is almost lost by this treatment. As to the cuffs, they are sewed together with one or two stitches to keep them in place, and thread is used to hold the folds of the shirt where our laundrymen use pins. The prices of hotel washing are about the same as at home.

In the Business Section.

But let us leave the market and take a walk through the streets. We are now in the business section. The shops are nothing like our stores at home. Most of them have no glass windows and some have no windows at all. The doors open right on the streets and the only light comes from them. The counters are at the backs of the stores instead of in the middle, and they usually run across the room facing the front. The goods are poorly displayed and the prices, as a rule, are not fixed. Much of the buying is done by bargaining and a less price is taken than is marked on the goods. And no wonder! For, look at the marks. That cotton is \$2 a yard, and that bolt of silk is marked at \$18 per yard. It is not so bad when you remember that \$2 Guatemalan is only 12 cents and that the price of the silk per yard is about an American dollar.

Business in these stores begins about 5 o'clock in the morning and ends at nightfall. Everything is shut for two or three hours in the middle of the day, when both employers and clerks go home for their luncheon or breakfast and the stores are shut as night. The street lights are not fixed, and the buying is done by bargaining and a less price is taken than is marked on the goods. And no wonder! For, look at the marks. That cotton is \$2 a yard, and that bolt of silk is marked at \$18 per yard. It is not so bad when you remember that \$2 Guatemalan is only 12 cents and that the price of the silk per yard is about an American dollar.

And now step and look at the girls as they go through the streets. They are of all classes, but there are more half-breeds and Indians than anything else. The pure whites dress much as we do, but nearly all go bare-headed. What heaps of hair. Some girls have it coiled in great masses over their ears and piled high at the back, and some have it straight, it seems, unnatural, and it makes me think of the verse of the vaudeville song: "Oh, the ladies they wear a great mass of hair." You'd think it would make their heads ache.

But if you think they grow it themselves, why, there's where you make your mistake.

"Playing Bear" and "Eating Iron."
As to the white part of the population, I find that it has its own customs of courtship and marriage. The Indians have other ways, and I will write of them in a future letter. As to the city dwellers, the lover never calls upon his sweetheart. He has no moonlight walks with her, and over after his engagement he can only talk with her in the presence of the family, including the sisters, cousins and aunts. Going along the street the other afternoon, I saw a young man standing before a window peering in at a girl who was sitting inside behind the bars. It made me think of Don Quixote and his Dulcinea del Toboso. Don stood on the sidewalk grasping the iron bars of the window, which were just about even with his head, and the pretty brown-eyed girl on the window ledge looked languishingly at him. The two were talking in low tones. They did not notice me as I passed.

This custom of courting is called "playing the bear," or "eating iron." It is the regular thing which precedes every marriage, and when a young man walks up and down in front of a certain window and makes sheep's eyes at it he is supposed to mean business. For a little while there may be some doubt about the girl in question, but he stubbornly turns his eyes away from all but his sweetheart, and she soon understands. After practicing the bear act for a while he is expected to go to the father and tell him he would like to call upon the family with a view to marrying his daughter. If papa says yes, he comes, and sits with the girl in the living room. He gets acquainted with all the family, and he must prosecute the remainder of his courtship in the presence of all. He may take the girl off to a corner of the room, but mamma and papa, grandma and auntie are always there to see and hear that what he does or says is eminently proper, and there is no hanging over the front



One of the Peddlers

gate upon leaving. From this time on he may pay attention to no other woman, and if he goes to a dance or party he must come early and wait for his sweetheart and spend the evening with her only.

After marriage both husband and wife have quite as much freedom if not more than in our country, and some of the men, I regret to hear, are not quite as good as they should be.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Key to the Situation—See Advertising.



The Doctor's Advice
by Dr. Lewis Baker

The questions answered below are general in character, the symptoms or diseases are given and the answers will apply to any case of similar nature. Those wishing further advice free, may address Dr. Lewis Baker, College Bldg., College-Brooklyn, Dayton, O., enclosing self-addressed stamped envelope for reply. Full name and address must be given, but only initials and fictitious name will be used in my answers. The prescriptions can be filled at any well stocked drug store. Any druggist can order of wholesaler.

"I am afraid of pneumonia."
Answer: The tightest cough can be loosened in one hour by using the following: Get from your druggist a 25-cent package of Cassia Nuttall's and make according to directions on bottle. This will break up any cold and loosen the tightest cough and soon cure by its laxative tonic action.

"Henry" writes: "If you can prescribe anything that will cure my stomach trouble and constipation, please do so. My breath is bad and I am irritable and cannot sleep."
Answer: You can be very easily cured of your troubles by taking tablets tripeptine. This is the most scientific and satisfactory treatment for the stomach and if taken according to directions you will soon be able to eat a hearty meal and not have any distress afterwards. Your constipation will be cured and your whole system will be put in a fine condition.

"John" says: "What can I do to gain an appetite? I do not eat and am getting thin and weak. Please advise a remedy."
Answer: The best tonic that I know of is made by mixing 5 ccs. of syrup of hypophosphites with 1 cc. of tincture of cascarilla. Mix by shaking well in a bottle and take a teaspoonful before each meal. You will soon gain flesh and your appetite will return.

"A. L. T." writes: "I am constantly embarrassed by my excessive fat. I have tried exercise and diet but they do not help. If you know of some harmless and effective medicine please publish."
Answer: To reduce your weight get 5 ccs. of kromatin elixir and 1 cc. of glycol arboreol. Get these two ingredients separately to avoid any adulteration. Mix and take 1 teaspoonful for three days after each meal, then take two teaspoonfuls. This is a perfectly harmless and sure remedy for obesity. Many women have written that they reduced their weight a pound a day after the first week.

"Gertrude" writes: "I am troubled a great deal with headache, dizzy spells, dark spots before my eyes, twinges of rheumatism. Can I be helped?"
Answer: You can not only be "helped" but you can be "cured" of all the troubles you mention. You need three grain suppositories (not cathartics) which are packed in sealed tubes and contain full directions for use. They are made of sulphur, cream of tartar and have no medicine in them. If these are taken regularly they purify the blood, stimulate the liver and bowels, thus healthy action and will gradually effect a cure.

"Mother" writes: "My children are usually ailing. What can be done by the use of the following: Tincture of cascarilla 1 dram, tincture of kromatin 1 dram, cream of tartar 1 dram, water 1/2 pint. Mix and give the child 10 to 15 drops in water one hour before each meal."

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